Safeguarding of India's vast coast line

631. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) what effective steps Government has adopted to adequately safeguard our vast oceans from the growing cases of perpetration of terrorism, gun-running, piracy and robbery which are now well organized and well-funded transnational crime syndicates;

(b) whether a co-operative venture of littoral states to tackle such threats like terrorism at sea and environmental disasters, etc. could be a beginning towards finding a reliable mechanism as a long-term solution; and

(c) if so, the initiative being taken to achieve this objective?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (c) Government has initiated several measures to strengthen its Coastal Security and surveillance to protect our coastline from infiltration of terrorists and others. Further joint exercises of Navy and Coast Guard in conjunction with marine police, Customs and others is taking place regularly.

Government recognizes the important role of cooperation with other littoral states in tackling such threats. India is participating in various fora of regional cooperation including Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia. Further coordinated patrolling is also carried out with certain navies including holding of Milan exercise with a large number of neighbouring navies.

Meeting of top commanders of three armed forces

632. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether recently a meeting of top commanders of three armed forces was held to find out measures to fill up 35,227 vacancies of officers in Army, improve medical facilities in defence hospitals, remove complications in defence procurement polices and modernize armed forces and to promote welfare of soldiers;

(b) if so, the details of the conclusion derived therein; and

(c) the action plan of the Government on the suggestions made in above said meeting?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (c) The Combined Commanders' Conference of the three services was held on 20th October, 2009, the minutes of which have yet to be received by the Government.

Decline in recruitment of women in defence

†633. SHRI KAPTAN SINGH SOLANKI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.